

RESEARCH PAPER
"The Chaplain as an Adult Educator"

James A. Marvin
15 March 1976

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Headquarters, USACHS
Ft. Wadsworth, NY 10305
151200 March 1976

ATSC-TE-RD

SUBJECT: The Chaplain As An Adult Educator

1. PROBLEM. To determine whether the army chaplaincy should continue to meet the needs of adult religious education by current methods or define new roles for the chaplain as an adult educator.

2. ASSUMPTIONS.

a. Religious education has positive value in the military community.

b. Some chaplains and laymen have real talent in this area.

3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.

a. Religion is by nature made up of ever deepening insights and can thereby only be fully studied, understood and appreciated by adults.

b. Throughout this century both civilian and military religious leaders have concentrated most of their effort in the field of religious education on the training of children under the age of 13.

c. Few adults receive any religious educational instruction other than from sermons which are not designed for such content.

d. A recent survey of chaplains' experiences with adult religious education indicates that little exists beyond a small Sunday School class for adults on most posts. Where successful programs do exist they rarely survive when the chaplain who began it departs.

e. Rarely can a chaplain find time to teach unless he takes time from his family. Priorities are elsewhere.

f. There are currently two skill identifiers for chaplains dealing with education, ASI 7E, Chaplain Education, and 7J, Supervisor of Religious Education. There is no ASI for chaplains

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who have the required skills and desire to teach primarily troops, permanent party, and their dependents.

g. More and more new courses are now being written which can be taught by trained lay teachers or studied independently.

4. DISCUSSION.

a. Advantages in specially identifying certain chaplains as Adult Educators and laying new emphasis on the part of all chaplains to coordinate efforts for greater participation in adult religious education.

(1) Chaplains with special skills in teaching, once identified, could be assigned where most needed on a more equitable basis than now occurs.

(2) If chaplains, so assigned, are expected to spend part or all of their working day in adult education, then good results, now only seen on a haphazard basis, should multiply in a more uniform manner.

(3) Chaplains currently too busy with other priorities or unskilled in teaching, with the aid of new materials now available and the special skills provided by the DRE, may develop successful lay teacher programs and courses within their areas of coverage.

b. Disadvantages occur when sufficient time is not provided for chaplains to properly prepare challenging programs. If lip service is all that is given to new programs, then real learning will give way to frustration and failure.

5. CONCLUSION. Chaplains exhibiting proven skill in the area of teaching adults and desirous of working part of their careers in this field should be so identified and assigned accordingly. Lay teachers, trained and provided with good materials, may also be effectively used if impetus comes directly from the Chief of Chaplains.

6. ACTION RECOMMENDED. That the conclusion in paragraph 5 be approved.

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ANNEXES: A -- Excerpt from sheet entitled, "The Bethel Series"
B -- Results of Chaplain Interview Survey
C -- ASI Code for 7E Chaplain Education and 7J Supervisor of Religious Education

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"The problem of religious communication on a congregation-to-minister level is a serious one. This "Bible gap" is so wide that often people listening to a Sunday sermon don't really know what is being said.

"The Bible gap exists in churches of every denomination, size and location...and it exists simply because most adults do not study the Bible. Usually only children receive formal Bible study; after age 13, any adult wishing to learn more about the Scriptures is too often on his own.

"Typically, the Christian education committee within the church finds it hard to get adult members to attend Bible study. Then, when some measure of attendance is finally achieved, the adult members find that they don't get enough out of it."

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Annex A

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STATISTICAL RESULTS OF CHAPLAIN INTERVIEW SURVEY

I. Army Posts Covered In Survey:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ft. Carson | 17. Ft. Gordon |
| 2. Ft. Hancock | 18. Ft. Stewart |
| 3. Ft. Bragg | 19. Ft. Sam Houston |
| 4. Seneca Army Depot | 20. Ft. Bliss |
| 5. Walter Reed Army Hospital | 21. Ft. Polk |
| 6. Aberdeen Proving Ground | 22. Ft. Rucker |
| 7. Presidio of San Francisco | 23. Ft. Monmouth |
| 8. White Sands Proving Ground | 24. Ft. Riley |
| 9. Ft. Dix | 25. Ft. Wainwright |
| 10. Redstone Arsenal | 26. Ft. Hood |
| 11. Ft. Ord | 27. Ft. Sill |
| 12. Ft. Knox | 28. Ft. MacArthur |
| 13. Ft. Wood | 29. Ft. Erwin |
| 14. Ft. Campbell | 30. Ft. Myer |
| 15. Ft. Meade | 31. Ft. Devens |
| 16. Ft. Jackson | 32. Ft. Benning |

II. Overseas Countries Covered In Survey:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Korea | 4. Germany |
| 2. Viet Nam | 5. France |
| 3. Thailand | 6. Puerto Rico |

III. General Appraisal:

Almost every above location averaged one small adult SS Class. At Ft. Campbell the entire SS once dropped to only 50 and rose again to 350 when a layman took over. Redstone apparently had the most widespread and exciting program with 14 Bible Study and Sharing Groups meeting in homes and a monthly fellowship dinner and program for the entire gathering of groups. Credits must also be given to programs at Ft. Meade, Ft. Rucker, Ft. Jackson, Ft. Bragg, Ft. Sill, Ft. Hood, Ft. Riley, Ft. Monmouth. Small programs were also found at some overseas posts. Posts credited by interviewees may no longer be so deserving and vice versa. Success usually begins and ends with the arrival and departure of chaplains interested in such programs. At some posts even these chaplains did little or nothing due to heavy workloads in other priority areas. Many programs were well received but limited to only a fraction of the total post population. Few chaplains felt properly informed as to programs sponsored by post RE Centers and were rarely called on for support.

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IV. The Variety Of Adult Courses Were As Follows:

1. Bible classes, etc. for PWOC
2. Faith at Work Retreats and Workshops
3. Serendipity Workshops
4. Film Discussion Series
5. Study and/or Discussion Groups in Chapels and Homes
6. TA Training
7. Parent Effectiveness Training
8. Marriage and Family Workshops
9. Pre-Marital Classes
10. Bible Study classes in troop areas
11. Navigator Bible Study Series
12. The Bethel Series
13. International Series
14. college credit courses on Bible, Comparative Religions and Church History

V. When chaplains were polled as to whether they wished to see adult religious education continue as it now is with chaplains doing this only as they choose on their own time or to specially designate chaplains to be involved as teachers/educators with adequate time allowed them for this function their response was two to one in favor of the latter proposal.

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CURRENT ASI CODES

- 7E Chaplain Education: For positions which require personnel employing special qualification and training in the field of education for service as instructors or staff in chaplain subjects and moral leadership at Army Service Schools, organized training facilities or command professional development programs.
- 7J Supervisor of Religious Education: For positions requiring personnel qualified in developing command Religious Education Programs. Personnel possessing this ASI supervise activities of DRE. Serves as a consultant to commanders and other chaplains in all areas of religious education to include age-group programs, methods of religious instruction and use of media in religious education and worship. Provides for seminars and workshops in teacher training, youth leadership, religious drama and uses of multi-media in education. Awarded to chaplains possessing an MA in Religious Education.

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Answer C

